

The Central Coast truly embraces the idea of a melting pot, a vibrant community of all colors and backgrounds. Our history of immigrants coming to our communities to work hard and raise their families goes back many years and continues today. We've seen countless families who came here with nothing and have realized the American Dream.

But the process is never an easy one. Dealing with the federal bureaucracy to gain legal citizenship is a complex affair. Luckily, my staff is available to help residents navigate any obstacles they face. The road toward citizenship can be a long one, but every summer many dozens of our neighbors join me at a naturalization ceremony to take the oath of Allegiance. These ceremonies are one of my favorite times of the year, an amazing experience of dreams being realized.

Citizenship and immigration issues are the responsibility of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service ([USCIS](#)), a branch of the Department of Homeland Security.

The nearest USCIS office is in San Jose and serves Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties.

US Citizenship and Immigration Service
1887 Monterey Road
San Jose, California 95112
MTWF: 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Th: 7:00 AM to 12:00 Noon.

The office is closed on Saturday, Sunday, and all Federal holidays.

800-375-5283 (National Customer Service Center)

*To speak with an Immigration Officer, **you must have an InfoPass appointment.** You may [make an appointment online](#)*

- To check the status of your case online or to see the Processing Dates for Applications and Petitions, [click here](#) .

Anyone who intends to immigrate to the United States will need to obtain an immigrant visa from their local consulate. Visas are also needed by intending immigrants who are already

present in the United States.

If you want to become an immigrant, you must go through a three-step process.

- First, the USCIS must approve an immigrant petition for you, which is usually filed by an employer or a relative for you.
- Second, a visa number, through the State Department must be immediately available to you, even if you are already in the United States. If you receive an immigrant visa number, it means that an immigrant visa has been assigned to you.
- Third, if you are already in the United States, you may apply to adjust to permanent resident status after a visa number becomes available for you. (If you are outside the United States when an immigrant visa number becomes available for you, you must then go to your local U.S. consulate to complete your processing.)

U.S. law limits the number of immigrant visa numbers that are available every year. This means that even if the USCIS approves an immigrant visa petition for you, you may not get an immigrant visa number immediately. In some cases, several years could pass between the time USCIS approves your immigrant visa petition and the State Department gives you an immigrant visa number. In addition, U.S. law also limits the number of immigrant visas available by country. This means you may have to wait longer if you come from a country with a high demand for U.S. immigrant visas.

For more information about immigrant visas, [click here](#) .

If you find that your questions are not answered here, please do not hesitate to contact my office. In the event you find yourself having a problem with a federal agency and require assistance, please fill out and sign a [privacy release form](#) .

Helpful Links

- [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#)
- [Santa Cruz County Immigration Project](#)
- [Support Services/Immigration & Citizenship - Diocese of Monterey](#)
- [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- [Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education Citizenship Classes](#)

Citizenship and Immigration FAQ's

- [How can a spouse of family member immigrate to the U.S.?](#)
- [How do I marry a non-U.S. Citizen?](#)
- [How do I submit a change of address with the USCIS?](#)
- [How do I renew an expiring alien registration card?](#)
- [What USCIS application must I file to become a United States Citizen?](#)
- [How do I replace a lost certificate of naturalization?](#)